United Nations A/C.3/57/L.52

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
12 November 2002

Original: English

Fifty-seventh session
Third Committee
Agenda item 109 (b)
Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

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Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 32/127 of 16 December 1977 and its subsequent resolutions concerning regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Recalling also the Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/51 of 9 March 1993[1] and its subsequent resolutions in this regard,

Bearing in mind the relevant resolutions of the Commission concerning advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights, including its most recent on that subject, resolution 2002/87 of 26 April 2002,[2]

Bearing in mind also the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,[3] which reiterates, inter alia, the need to consider the possibility of establishing regional and

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 3* and corrigenda (E/1993/23 and Corr.2, 4 and 5), chap. II, sect. A.
[2] Ibid., *2002, Supplement No. 3* (E/2002/23), chap. II, sect. A.
[3] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

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subregional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights where they do not already exist,

Recalling that the World Conference recommended that more resources should be made available for the strengthening of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights under the programme of technical cooperation in the field of human rights of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Reaffirming that regional arrangements play an important role in promoting and protecting human rights and should reinforce universal human rights standards, as contained in international human rights instruments, and their protection,

Noting the progress achieved so far in the promotion and protection of human rights at the regional level under the auspices of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the regional intergovernmental organizations,

Considering that cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements in the field of human rights continues to be both substantive and supportive and that possibilities exist for increased cooperation,

Welcoming the fact that the Office of the High Commissioner has been systematically pursuing a regional and subregional approach through a variety of complementary means and methods in order to maximize the impact of the activities of the United Nations at the national level,

1. *Takes notes with satisfaction* of the report of the Secretary-General on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights;[4]

2. *Welcomes* the continuing cooperation and assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the further strengthening of the existing regional arrangements and regional machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular through technical cooperation which is aimed at national capacity-building, public information and education, with a view to exchanging information and experience in the field of human rights;

3. *Also welcomes*, in that respect, the close cooperation of the Office of the High Commissioner in the organization of regional and subregional training courses and workshops in the field of human rights, high-level governmental expert meetings and regional conferences of national human rights institutions, aimed at creating greater understanding in the regions of issues concerning the promotion and protection of human rights, improving procedures and examining the various systems for the promotion and protection of universally accepted human rights standards and identifying obstacles to ratification of the principal international human rights treaties and strategies to overcome them;

4. *Recognizes*, therefore, that progress in promoting and protecting all human rights depends primarily on efforts made at the national and local levels and that the regional approach should imply intensive cooperation and coordination with all partners involved, while bearing in mind the importance of international cooperation;

[4] A/57/283.

5. *Stresses* the importance of the programme of technical cooperation in the field of human rights, renews its appeal to all Governments to consider making use of the possibilities offered by the United Nations under this programme of organizing information or training courses at the national level for government personnel on the application of international human rights standards and the experience of relevant international bodies, and notes with satisfaction, in that respect, the establishment of technical cooperation projects with Governments of all regions;

6. *Welcomes* the growing exchanges between the United Nations and the bodies created by the United Nations in accordance with the treaties dealing with human rights, on the one hand, and regional intergovernmental organizations, such as the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and other regional institutions on the other;

7. *Also welcomes* the appointment by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of four human rights personalities to serve as regional advisers, who will play a significant role in the promotion of human rights and human rights advocacy through the design of strategies and the development of partnerships for human rights, facilitate coordination of human rights technical cooperation in the region and assist regional cooperation at large, for example, among national institutions, parliamentary human rights bodies, bar associations and non-governmental organizations;

8. *Further welcomes* the placement by the Office of the High Commissioner of regional representatives in subregions and in regional commissions to allow for closer working relations with States, international and regional organizations as well as with non-governmental organizations;

9. *Recalls* in this regard the positive experience of the regional and subregional presence in Southern, Central, Eastern and West Africa;

10. *Notes with interest* the results of the African regional dialogues held at Geneva and Arusha in November 2001 and May 2002, respectively, in providing guidance to Governments, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations as well as better links with the African Union and other subregional organizations, and in this respect notes with appreciation the Constitutive Act of the African Union, in particular article 4, which states that the Union shall function in accordance with several principles, inter alia, the promotion of gender equality and the respect for democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law and good governance;

11. *Also notes with interest* the increased, valuable sharing of concrete national experiences at the ninth and tenth Workshops on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asian and Pacific Region on the implementation of the Framework of Regional Technical Cooperation for the Asia-Pacific Region, which contributes to the enhancement of the promotion and protection of human rights in the region;

12. *Takes note with interest* of the Quito Framework for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, which serves as a basis for the regional strategy of the Office of the High Commissioner, aimed at strengthening national capacities for the promotion of human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean,

and in this regard welcomes the meeting on the enforcement of the system of treaty bodies held in Quito, Ecuador, in August 2002;

13. *Welcomes* the continued cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner and regional organizations in Europe and Central Asia, in particular the development, as a priority, of a regional approach to preventing trafficking in persons;

14. *Notes with appreciation* the holding of the International Conference on Human Rights and Democratization in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in November 2001, co-organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Government of Croatia and the European Commission, which provided the opportunity to review developments in the field of human rights in the region;

15. *Invites* States in areas in which regional arrangements in the field of human rights do not yet exist to consider concluding agreements, with a view to establishing, within their respective regions, suitable regional machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General, as foreseen in programme 19 (Human rights) of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005,[5] to continue to strengthen exchanges between the United Nations and regional intergovernmental organizations dealing with human rights and to make available adequate resources from within the regular budget of technical cooperation to the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner to promote regional arrangements;

17. *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to pay special attention to the most appropriate ways of assisting countries of the various regions, at their request, under the programme of technical cooperation and to make, where necessary, relevant recommendations;

18. *Invites* the Secretary-General, in the report he will present to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-ninth session, to provide information on progress made since the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action[3] on reinforcing the exchange of information and extending collaboration between the organs of the United Nations dealing with human rights and regional organizations in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on the state of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, to formulate concrete proposals and recommendations on ways and means to strengthen cooperation between United Nations and regional arrangements in the field of human rights and to include therein the results of action taken in pursuance of the present resolution;

20. *Decides* to consider this question further at its fifty-ninth session.

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[5] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/55/6/Rev.1).